

1 **BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

2 **1. Related Applications**

3 This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application Serial No.
4 60/125062, filed March 18, 1999, and entitled "Filtering, Scaling, and Loading of Electronic
5 Guide Data," which is incorporated herein by reference. This application is also related
6 generally to U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/527,313 entitled "Systems and
7 Methods for Electronic Program Guide Data Services," which was filed on the same day as
8 the present application, and is incorporated herein by reference.

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10 **2. The Field of the Invention**

11 The present invention relates to electronic program guides (EPGs). More
12 specifically, the present invention relates to application program interfaces enabling EPG
13 data sources and applications using EPG data to interface with EPG services.

15 **3. The Prior State of the Art**

16 Electronic program guides (EPGs) are designed to permit television viewers as well
17 as Internet webcast viewers to browse and select from television listings which are displayed
18 on a television screen. Before being displayed, the EPG data is downloaded from an EPG
19 source such as a head end or a server to a destination device such as a television, computer
20 or set top box. The EPG source, which may receive EPG data from a number of different
21 EPG data providers, usually consolidates and encrypts the EPG data before transmitting it to
22 the destination device. In conventional systems, the destination device is only capable of
23 receiving EPG data from only one EPG data source, which indicates that the destination
24 device must accept the format of the EPG data provided by the EPG source. More